

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00

IO-13 SCCT-01 SSM-03 SAM-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01

ACDA-07 /110 W

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O P 171233Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1527

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 63

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

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FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 6961

E.O. 116527/ &\$

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG 17: METN CAMPAIGN

MAY HAVE STARTED; LITTLE MILITARY ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE;

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PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST CALL TO ARMS.

REF: BEIRUT 6945

1. SUMMARY: CONTRADICTORY REPORTS ON BEGINNINGS OF METN CAMPAIGN. PLO SAYS IT WILL NOT GIVE UP IN MOUNTAINS EXCEPT UNDER TERMS OF OVERALL SETTLEMENT. BEIRUT AREA QUIETER. LITTLE ACTION IN NORTH OR SOUTH. FRANGIE MESSAGE EMPHASIZES TO CAIRO ACCORDS, AND SUGGESTS HE WILL NOT TRY STAY IN OFFICE BEYOND END OF TERM. GEMAYEL EMPHASIZES CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM DIALOGUE. CHAMOUN CRITICIZES IDEA OF ANOTHER ARAB SUMMIT. LEFTISTS AND PALESTINIANS APPEALING FOR TOTAL MOBILIZATION OF THEIR SUPPORTERS, AND JUNBLATT MAY BE HAVING SOME SUCCESS RECRUITING NEW POPULAR LIBERATION ARMY. ISLAMIC GROUP ACTIVE. KARAME SAYS WILL NOT ATTEND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING THIS WEEK. SARKIS KEEPING HIS POWDER DRY. LIBYAN EMISSARY TALKS TO LEFTIST FRIENDS. IMPACT OF NEW SYRIAN BORDER RULES STILL UNCLEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBIGUOUS BEGINNINGS OF METN CAMPAIGN. RIGHTIST RADIO REPORTED MIDAFTERNOON AUG 16 THAT TOWN OF HAMMANA IN METN HAD BEEN TAKEN BY UNSPECIFIED FORCES WITHOUT RESISTANCE, AND L'ORIENT AUG 17 SPEAKS OF BROAD OFFENSIVE ON FIVE AXES. HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT NO GROUND ADVANCES UNDERTAKEN AT LEAST UNTIL END OF DAY AUG 16. PALESTINIAN COMMAND DENIED ANY ATTACK ON HAMMANA, WHICH IS IMPORTANT TRANSIT POINT BETWEEN PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED SOUTH LEBANON AND PALESTINIAN MOUNTAIN BASTIONS OF MTEIN AND AINTOURA, HELD BY PALESTINIANS SINCE MONTH OF MARCH. RIGHTIST RADIO AT 1000 LOCAL AUG 17 CLAIMS SYRIAN FORCES BEGAN ADVANCE ON HAMMANA FROM EAST AT MIDNIGHT AUG 16-17. WHETHER METN CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN IN EARNEST OR NOT, IT CLEAR THAT CHRISTIANS ARE POISED FOR OFFENSIVE, AND THAT VERY HEAVY ARTILLERY FIRING

CONTINUES THROUOUT AREA. PLO MINISTER OF INFORMATION YASSIR ABID RABBU (PDFLP) STATED FLATLY AUG 16 THAT PLO WOULD NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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MOUNTAIN AREA EXCEPT IN CONTAXT OF OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

3. BEIRUT AREA. BEIRUT EAST-WEST HOSTILITIES CONFINED TO SNIPING MORNING OF AUG 16, BUT SOME ARTILLERY FIRE IN AFTERNOON. AL-MUHARRIR SAYS 35 SHELLS HIT WEST BEIRUT, 45 HIT EAST BEIRUT. LEFTISTS CLAIM DESTROYED SEVERAL RIGHTIST POSITIONS

IN AREAS OF DABBASS SQUARE AND ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY. RIGHTISTS SAY STILL PURSUING PALESTINIAN REMNANTS FROM TELL ZAATAR IN MONTE VERDE AREA. PLO ITSELF SAYS LAST DEFENDERS OF TELL ZAATAR HAVE ESCAPED TO WEST BEIRUT.

4. ELSEWHERE. IN NORTH, LEFTISTS/PALESTINIANS CLAIM HAVE REPELLED ANOTHER CHRISTIAN ATTACK ON THEIR POSITIONS AT ALMA AND BEIT AUKER AUG 16, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION. IN SOUTH, PALESTINIANS NOW CLAIM "HUGE" SYRIAN AND CHRISTIAN REINFORCEMENTS IN JEZZINE AREA. Wafa ANNOUNCES THAT JOINT COMMAND HAS PROCLAIMED GENERAL MOBILIZATION IN SOUTH AND HAS OPENED RECRUITMENT OFFICE.

5. RIGHT SPEAKS OUT. PRESIDENT FRANGIE DELIVERED MESSAGE TO THE NATION AUG 16 LAYING OUT FOUR CONDITIONS FOR PEACE: STRICT APPLICATION OF CAIRO ACCORDS; APPEAL TO "A GROUP OF BROTHER COUNTRIES" FOR ASSISTANCE IN FIELDS OF SECURITY AND RECONSTRUCTION; POLITICAL "PAUSE" ON PART OF ALL LEBANESE FACTIONS TO PERMIT NEW GOVERNMENT TO LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE OF LEBANON; AND CEASEFIRE. HE STRONGLY ATTACKED PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ISLAMIC GROUPLEADERS WERE ENCOURAGED BY MESSAGE INsofar AS IT SEEMS TO SUGGEST FRANGIE'S WILLINGNESS TO TURN OVER POWERS OF OFFICE TO SARKIS ON SEPT 23. PIERRE GEMAYEL SAYS HE MAKING GREAT EFFORTS TO BEGIN CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM DIALOGUE. CONFESSIONALISM, HE SAYS, LEADS TO TYRANNY. CAMILLE CHAMOUN SAYS LEBANON WILL NOT JOIN ANY ARAB SUMMIT BEFORE COMPLETE RETURN OF PALESTINIANS TO THEIR CAMPS, AND INVITED ARAB LEAGUE, "IF IT IS SINCERE," TO

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OPPOSE PALESTINIAN INFRINGEMENTS ON LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY. HE NEVERTHELESS PRAISED SINCERITY OF AL DEPUTY KHOLI. PERE KASSIS, FOR HIS PART, SAID THAT AS RESULT OF HIS RECENT EUROPEAN TOUR, EUROPEAN LEADERS HAVE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF LEBANESE PROBLEM AS WAR WHICH OPPOSES A PEOPLE WHICH WANTS TO LIVE IN ITS OWN COUNTRY IN FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY TO A PEOPLE WHICH HAS LOST ITS HOMELAND AND WANTS TO ESTABLISH A NEW HOMELAND IN LEBANON.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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IO-13 SCCT-01 SSM-03 SAM-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01

ACDA-07 /110 W

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O P 171233Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1528

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 64

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 6961

6. LEFTIST/PALESTINIAN CALL TO ARMS. PLO INFORMATION
CHIEF YASSIR ABID RABBU HAS CALLED FOR GENERAL
MOBILIZATION OF ALL PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON AND
ABROAD TO RESIST CONSPIRACY AND BREAK ISRAELI PIRACY
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ON SEAS. HE SAID SYRIA IS NOT SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN COMPROMISE SOLUTION. JUNBLATT HAS CALLED UPON "OUR BROTHERS TO MAKE EVERY VILLAGE IN THE MOUNTAINS INTO A FORTRESS." HE SAID HE IS GOING UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS HIMSELF. WE UNDERSTAND HIS NEW "POPULAR LIBERATION ARMY" IS MEETING SOME INITIAL RECRUITING SUCCESS: SMALL NUMBER OF MOSLEM ARMY OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN STAYING ON SIDELINES OF WAR SO FAR HAVE REPORTEDLY JOINED UP. JUNBLATT IS REPORTEDLY OFFERING 3,000 LEBANESE POUNDS PER MONTH SALARY TO SENIOR OFFICERS. MONEY SEEMS TO BE COMING DIRECTLY TO JUNBLATT FROM LIBYAN AND OTHER FOREIGN REJECTIONIST SOURCES (NOT THROUGH PLO, AS IN PAST). EXISTING LEFTIST MILITIAS, HOWEVER, SEEM DISINTERESTED IN JUNBLATT'S CALL. AL-MUHARRIR, PERHAPS REFLECTING LEFTIST WISHES MORE THAN REALITIES, REPORTS "GUERRILLA WARFARE" HAS BORKEN OUT IN SYRIAN-OCCUPIED BEKAA VALLEY IN VICINITY OF BAALBEK. ELSEWHERE ON LEFT, WE HEAR THAT SAEB SALAM AND IBRAHIM QULAYLAT ARE LIKELY TO MEET SOON TO COMPOSE DIFFERENCES GROWING OUT OF ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN "PIONEERS OF REFORM" (LED BY SALAM'S SON TAMAM) AND MURABITOUN (LED BY QULAYLAT).

7. ISL TLZGROUP. MODERATE ISLAMIC GROUP MET AGAIN AUG 16, THIS TIME WITH YASSIR ARAFAT. GROUP SAYS IT IS SEEKING WAYS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH NON-LEFTIST WHITE AND DRUZE LEADERS. IT POSTPONED UNTIL AUG 19 ITS NEXT MEETING, AT WHICH TIME IT WILL HAVE COMMENTS ON MOSLEM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE AND FRANGIE'S ATTEMPT TO CALL MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. GROUP ALSO DISCUSSED ANOTHER POSSIBLE SALAM-PIERRE GEMAYEL MEETING. WE UNDERSTAND GREEK ORTHODOX BISHOP SALIBI IS TRYING TO BRING GROUP TOGETHER WITH KFOUR FRONT.

8. OTHER LEBANESE POLITICAL MOVES. PRIMIN KARAME SAID AUG 16 HE WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN NEXT FEW DAYS. MINISTER GHASSAN TUEINI IS REPORTEDLY TRYING TO GET HIM TO CHANGE HIS MIND. PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS IS ALSO UNDERSTOOD TO BE OPPOSED TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING AT
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PRESENT TIME, AND IS SAID TO BELIEVE THAT EFFORTS TO REACTIVATE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS CANNOT SUCCEED UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HE IS AVOIDING COMMENT ON PIERRE GEMAYEL'S CALL FOR DECENTRALIZATION. AL-ANWAR REPORTS THAT SECRET "DRUZE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION" OF ANTI-JUNBLATTIST PERSUASION BEING FORMER NON-JUNBLATTI DRUZE LEADER

BASHIR EL-AWAR QUOTED AS SAYING LEBANESE DRUZES DO NOT ACCEPT JUNBLATT, AND SUPPORT SYRIAN INTERVENTION. ABDUL GHANI HAMAD, HEAD OF MOBILE FORCE OF LEBANESE GENDARMERIE HAS CALLED MEETING FOR AUG 17 AT HILU BARRACKS IN EFFORT TO REVIVE GENDARMERIE.

9. LIBYAN "MEDIATION." NEW LIBYAN EMISSARY DOURDA SAYS HIS GOVERNMENT STILL SUPPORTS JULY 29 SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT (WHICH EVEN PALESTINIANS AND SYRIANS SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT). AUG 16 HE MET TWICE EACH WITH JUNBLATT AND ARAFAT, AS WELL AS WITH VARIOUS OTHER PALESTINIAN AND LEFTIST LEADERS. ONE SOURCE TOLD US HE CRITICIZED JUNBLATTIS FOR NOT MAKING GREATER MILITARY EFFORTS, BUT PROMISED CONTINUED LIBYAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

10. SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER. CONFUSION STILL AS TO EXACT IMPACT OF NEW SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER RULES. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS MAY HAVE HAD AS MUCH INTEREST IN NEW MEASURES AS SYRIANS. TOGETHER WITH INCREASED ISRAELI BLOCKAGE OF PORTS OF TYRE AND SIDON, IT APPEARS THAT MOVE IS FURTHER SQUEEZE ON PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST PART OF LEBANON. IN ADDITION TO OFFICES FOR ISSUANCE OF EXIT PERMITS AT ZAHLE AND MASNAA (BOTH IN SYRIAN-OCCUPIED AREA), AL-ANWAR SAID THAT OFFICE ESTABLISHED AT ZUK MIKHAL, NEAR JOUNIEH. PROCEDURE SEEMS TO BE THAT TRAVELERS SHOULD APPLY AT ONE OF THESE THREE PLACES, THEN WAIT FOR TWO DAYS FOR PERMIT. WE HAVE HEARD THAT TRAVELERS IN SYRIA SEEKING TO GO TO LEBANON MUST WAIT FOUR DAYS FOR PERMITS. NO INDICATIONS YET HOW RULES WILL AFFECT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN WEST BEIRUT, INCLUDING OURS. IT ALSO UNCLEAR HOW PALESTINAINS, IF ANY, MIGHT HENCEFORTH GET TO DAMASCUS.

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Executive Order: GS
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Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
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EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

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TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
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